

In The Matter Of:

Kleinhans Farms Estates, LLC v. Flathead County

Kirsten Holland September 24, 2009 DV 08-614(B)

Martin-Lake & Associates, Inc. P.O. Box 7765 Missoula, MT 59807-7765 406-543-6447 / fax: 406-543.5014 mla@martin-lake.net

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Min-U-Script® with Word Index

Attorney Notes

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	· ·		
1	IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT	1	
2	OF THE STATE OF MONTANA	2	INDEX
3	IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF FLATHEAD	3	witness: Page:
4		4	KIRSTEN HOLLAND,
5	KLEINHANS FARMS ESTATES, LLC Montana Limited Liability	5	Examination By Mr. Perry 4
6	Company, {	6	
7	Plaintiff,) No. DV-08-614(B)	7	
8	vs. }	8	
9	FLATHEAD COUNTY,	1	
-	Defendant.	9	EXHIBITS:
10	Defendant:	10	None
11		11	
12		12	
13		13	
14	DEPOSITION OF	14	
15	KIRSTEN HOLLAND	15	
16		16	Reporter's Certificate 21
17		17	•
18	On September 24, 2009, beginning at 1:52 p.m.,	18	
		19	
19	the deposition of KIRSTEN HOLLAND, appearing at the	20	
20	insistence of Defendant, was taken at the Earl Bennett		
21	Building, 1035 First Avenue West, Kalispell, Montana,	21	
22	pursuant to the Montana Rules of Civil Procedure, before	22	* Denotes phonetic spelling
23	Bambi A. Goodman, Registered Professional Reporter,	23	
24	Certified Realtime Reporter, Notary Public.	24	
25		25	
	Page 2	Ī	Page 4
	•		
1	APPEARANCES	1	KIRSTEN HOLLAND,
2	AFFERRANCES	2	having been first duly sworn to testify to the truth,
4		3	the whole truth and nothing but the truth, testified
	Terance P. Perry, Esq.	4	upon her oath as follows:
5	DATSOPOULOS, MACDONALD & LIND, P.C.	5	EXAMINATION
	201 West Main Street, Suite 201	6	BY MR. PERRY:
6	Missoula, MT 59802	7	Q Good afternoon, ma'am. My name is Terance
	406-728-0810		Perry. I represent Kleinhans Farms, LLC in regard to
8	appeared on behalf of the Plaintiff.	` ا	the North Shore Ranch project. I think you're familiar
9	Alan F. McCormick, Esq.	10	with that one.
	GARLINGTON, LOHN & ROBINSON		A I am.
10	199 West Pine	11	
11	Missoula, MT 59802	12	Q I'm here to ask you a few questions today about
i	Missoula, MT 59802 406-523-2500	12 13	your involvement in the projects. And just a couple of
	Missoula, MT 59802	1	your involvement in the projects. And just a couple of ground rules. If you don't understand my question, just
12	Missoula, MT 59802 406-523-2500	13	your involvement in the projects. And just a couple of
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12 13	Missoula, MT 59802 406-523-2500	13 14 15	your involvement in the projects. And just a couple of ground rules. If you don't understand my question, just tell me and I'll be happy to rephrase it. If you need
12 13 14 15 16	Missoula, MT 59802 406-523-2500	13 14 15 16	your involvement in the projects. And just a couple of ground rules. If you don't understand my question, just tell me and I'll be happy to rephrase it. If you need to take a break at any point in time, to use the ladies' room or anything like that, just tell me. Always happy
12 13 14 15 16 17	Missoula, MT 59802 406-523-2500 appeared on behalf of the Defendant.	13 14 15 16 17	your involvement in the projects. And just a couple of ground rules. If you don't understand my question, just tell me and I'll be happy to rephrase it. If you need to take a break at any point in time, to use the ladies' room or anything like that, just tell me. Always happy to accommodate such a request, as long as there isn't a
12 13 14 15 16 17	Missoula, MT 59802 406-523-2500 appeared on behalf of the Defendant.	13 14 15 16 17 18 19	your involvement in the projects. And just a couple of ground rules. If you don't understand my question, just tell me and I'll be happy to rephrase it. If you need to take a break at any point in time, to use the ladies' room or anything like that, just tell me. Always happy to accommodate such a request, as long as there isn't a question in front of you at the time.
12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	Missoula, MT 59802 406-523-2500 appeared on behalf of the Defendant.	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	your involvement in the projects. And just a couple of ground rules. If you don't understand my question, just tell me and I'll be happy to rephrase it. If you need to take a break at any point in time, to use the ladies' room or anything like that, just tell me. Always happy to accommodate such a request, as long as there isn't a question in front of you at the time. A Sure.
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12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	Missoula, MT 59802 406-523-2500 appeared on behalf of the Defendant.	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	your involvement in the projects. And just a couple of ground rules. If you don't understand my question, just tell me and I'll be happy to rephrase it. If you need to take a break at any point in time, to use the ladies' room or anything like that, just tell me. Always happy to accommodate such a request, as long as there isn't a question in front of you at the time. A Sure. Q The court reporter has difficulty taking down head nods, shakes of the head. You have to verbalize your answer so we have a clear transcript; okay?
12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24	Missoula, MT 59802 406-523-2500 appeared on behalf of the Defendant. Also Present: Reith Simon, Sean Averill	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24	your involvement in the projects. And just a couple of ground rules. If you don't understand my question, just tell me and I'll be happy to rephrase it. If you need to take a break at any point in time, to use the ladies' room or anything like that, just tell me. Always happy to accommodate such a request, as long as there isn't a question in front of you at the time. A Sure. Q The court reporter has difficulty taking down head nods, shakes of the head. You have to verbalize your answer so we have a clear transcript; okay? A Okay.
12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	Missoula, MT 59802 406-523-2500 appeared on behalf of the Defendant. Also Present: Reith Simon, Sean Averill	13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	your involvement in the projects. And just a couple of ground rules. If you don't understand my question, just tell me and I'll be happy to rephrase it. If you need to take a break at any point in time, to use the ladies' room or anything like that, just tell me. Always happy to accommodate such a request, as long as there isn't a question in front of you at the time. A Sure. Q The court reporter has difficulty taking down head nods, shakes of the head. You have to verbalize your answer so we have a clear transcript; okay?

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Can you please state your full name for the record.

- 3 A Kirsten Holland.
- 4 Q And how do spell your first and last name?
- 5 A K-i-r-s-t-e-n H-o-l-l-a-n-d.
- 6 **O** And where do you live?
- 7 A Eureka, Montana.
- 8 Q And can you tell me your residential address.
- 9 A Yes; 708 Highway 37, Eureka.
- 10 Q And your date of birth.
- 11 A 11/17/68.
- 12 Q And a little bit about your educational
- 13 background starting with high school. Where'd you
- 14 attend high school?
- A Southern California; Fallbrook High School in
- 16 San Diego County. Went to San Diego State University.
- 17 I got a degree in international studies, then went to
- 18 San Francisco State University and received a degree in
- urban studies. Went to a year of law school at USF,
- 20 University of San Francisco. Decided it wasn't for me,
- 21 and then worked in various community development and
- 22 nonprofit organizations in San Francisco, the San
- 23 Francisco Foundation, East Bay Community Law Center, and
- 24 then went to the San Francisco SPCA where I started
- 25 working with animals.

- 1 of San Francisco and Alameda County, I didn't work as a
 - 2 government official. So I didn't do subdivisions and
 - things like that. I did neighborhood improvement,
 - 4 neighborhood development, community development.
 - **Q** When did you first meet Keith Simon?
 - 6 A I don't remember. It must have been sometime
 - 7 either just before the application was submitted or
 - maybe right after; I don't recall.
 - 9 Q It would have been after you became employed with Flathead County, though.
 - 11 A Yes; absolutely.
 - 12 Q You'd never met Keith before that.
 - A No, not that I know of.
 - 4 Q And would you have met Sean Averill about the
 - 5 same time that you first met Keith Simon?
 - A If I ever met Sean Averill before that, it
 - wasn't a formal introduction. I might have just known of him because of his long history in the valley and his
 - 19 family.
 - Q At some point in time, do you recall meeting with Keith Simon and/or Sean Averill during the course
 - 22 of which meeting Mr. Simon described his vision, so to
 - speak, for the North Shore Ranch property?
 - 24 A Yes.
 - **Q** What do you recall about that conversation?

Page 6

Moved to Montana in 2004. Worked for Flathead

2 County; started in March, March 15th, 2004. And I've

- 3 worked for the county, in one capacity or another, ever
- 4 since.

1

- 5 Q So you would have started work with the county
- 6 about the same time that Mr. Grieve did?
- A I did, except when I started, I started, I
- s think, two weeks or a month later than he did. I
- 9 started as the county grant writer, working for the
- 10 commissioners directly. And then in July, I think it
- 11 was July 5th, I started at the county planning office as
- 12 a planner one. So I transitioned, after about three
- 13 months, from grant writing to planning.
- Q And with respect to planning before July 5 of
- 15 2004, did you have any experience as a planner or anything like that?
- A My experience with land use planning was
- 8 directly with the San Francisco Foundation. I worked on
- 19 a six-million-dollar neighborhood improvement initiative
- 20 for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. So my
- 21 work in land use planning was as a representative of the
- 22 community groups. I didn't work as a land use planner.
- 23 I worked more as one of the people representing the
- 24 people in the community that was being redeveloped. So
- 5 although I worked with the City of Oakland and the City

- A Not a lot. The last two years I've been
- 2 running the county animal shelter, and it's a very
- 3 different game, so to speak. So I don't -- I mean, I've
- 4 gone from one job to another. So my memory is pretty
- 5 foggy.
 - But I do know that when Mr. Simon and I spoke
- 7 about North Shore Ranch, we discovered that we both had
- 8 in common the fact that we were from California. And he
- 9 asked me if I was familiar with a project he'd worked on
- o there called Pajaro Dunes in the Monterey Bay peninsula,
- 11 I think, is where it's located, sort of around there.
 - O Uh-huh.
- A And I remember him describing his desire to do
 - something similar in Flathead County in terms of the environmental footprint, if you will; something that
- 16 preserved the integrity of the area.
 - **Q** Do you recall anything else about that meeting?
- A Not off the top of my head. I'm sure there's plenty more, but that's all I recall in specifics.
- Q Do you recall how long a meeting it was when you first met Keith Simon?
 - A No.
- Q Was the meeting here at the Flathead County
- 24 complex, so to speak?
 - A I believe it was.

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O Did you have more than this just one meeting with Mr. Simon, with respect to the North Shore Ranch

A Oh, sure. I don't recall how many times, but 4 we've met on more than one occasion. And I think they were all in the planning office.

Q During the time that you were involved with that project on behalf of the county and engaged in these discussions with Mr. Simon, did you form any opinion as to the type of project that he intended to 10 11 try to develop on that land?

A I always form an opinion. 12

Q What was it? 13

A It was positive. I mean, we work with -- we 14 15 worked with all kinds of developers. And at the time in the planning office, there were a lot of people who did not put a lot of thought into their projects and there 17 were people who did. And I had the joy and pain of 18 working with both types. And I think that, if memory 19 serves correctly, Mr. Simon was on the higher end of the 20 scale in terms of the amount of work and effort and 21 meetings and thought. So my opinion was that this is someone who's doing the work. 23

My personal opinion, you know, might differ 24 25 from day-to-day about a project. But my personal

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1 Stickney, had originally received the file. And, again,

my memory's a little foggy. But I believe that her

workload was such that she needed to transition the file

to somebody else, so I took it. And then as the planner

in charge of it, when you receive a file, you're

basically in charge of it. It doesn't mean you don't

get feedback from your fellow planners or from your superiors, whether it's the assistant director or the

director. But you're responsible for ushering it through the process. 10

O And for how long were you responsible for ushering it through that process?

A I couldn't tell you time, because I don't 13 recall. I'd be making something up if I told you a 15

Q Your best approximation.

A Well, I know I had it for the length of the time the application landed on my desk. So it would be sometime after it was submitted, I suppose, through the night of the first planning board meeting. So several months, I would assume --

22 O Okay.

A -- at least.

O And after the first planning board meeting,

25 were you taken off this application, or what happened?

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1 opinion didn't figure into the project. But I remember 2 feeling that this was a good project to work on because

3 there was a lot of information at hand and that

questions were answered and information was there. Not 4

5 like some people who just basically carve it up and say

Do my subdivision. 6

O Right. You know, during the time that you were 7 involved in this project in a professional capacity on behalf of the county, did you form an opinion that Keith Simon and the Kleinhans Farms, LLC was attempting to 11 develop this land in a responsible manner?

A Sure.

12

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Q Did you ever form the opinion that the 13 14 applicant, Kleinhans Farms, LLC and Mr. Simon and Mr. Averill, were in any way seeking to skirt subdivision regulations in place in the county in any 16 17 wav?

18 A No.

O And with respect to this project, were you 19 charged by Mr. Harris or Mr. Grieve with processing the 21 application?

A Was I the planner in charge of the application?

O At any point in time.

A When the project was first submitted, if I 24

25 remember correctly, another planner, Nicole Lopez

Page 12

A There was -- again, I don't mean to not be helpful, it's just I don't recall everything now that I don't work in the office anymore. 4

Q That's okay; your best memory.

A I presented the file, the planning board made 5 their recommendation, the applicant asked for some time before it went to the commissioners, and then I think there was a request to do what Jeff used to call a mid-course correction, which is basically you have the opportunity to make amendments and changes to your plan and resubmit before it goes to the commissioners so you fall into the same process. You pay different fees and whatnot. And then after that, I don't know where we were on the calendar. If I knew -- I don't recall if I was taken off of it. I've never been taken off a project, so I don't think I was taken off this one. 16

But my work had changed, because I then became the floodplain administrator for the county because the floodplain -- well, Jeff's the floodplain administrator; excuse me. I became the floodplain manager, if you will. And -- because the former person left and that was Tracy Sears. And so I took on floodplain and 23 started working on floodplain instead of subdivisions -- or worked on them in the capacity -- worked on subdivisions as far as floodplain

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1 went but didn't have individual files anymore.

Q Okay.

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For approximately how long were you employed by Flathead County in the planning department and charged with processing subdivision applications?

A I started at the planning office July 5th,

7 2004, and I left the planning office November 17th,

2007. That's my birthday, that's why I remember. And I

9 worked on subdivisions at least from the beginning,

10 definitely. I think I was floodplain administrator only

11 maybe six months; so two-and-a-half years.

Q Two-and-a-half years?

A Uh-huh.

Q Can you approximate for me -- tough question.

15 Can you approximate for me how many subdivision

16 applications you processed during that

17 two-and-a-half-year time period, best approximation?

A So per month, I might have had like six or seven, several hundred.

20 Q Several hundred?

A Few hundred; low end, few hundred, I would

22 think. I usually have more than -- I mean, it depends,

because we'd have -- let me take that back -- six or

4 seven major subdivisions a month. Because then we'd

have minor subdivisions that didn't go to the planning

1 Q Your business memory's fine.

Aside from this project, the North Shore Ranch project, to your recollection, was any other subdivision

4 application denied in your tenure here with the planning

5 office -- planning department predicated upon the fact

6 that the land at issue was encumbered by the PP&L

7 easement?

A I don't recall any of my applications being

denied based on a PP&L easement. But I do recall otherplanners' subdivisions being denied based on easements.

I I don't know that they were PP&L. I know one of them

was a power easement, but it might have been Bonneville.

But I know there were others.

Q Okay; same question with respect to risk of harm posed by seismic activity. Do you recall, in your

tenure here, whether or not any subdivision was everdenied based upon any purported risk of harm from

18 seismic activity?

A None of mine, but I feel like there was another one. But it wasn't mine, and so I can't recall. See, I was subdivision coordinator as well. So I not only had

22 my own subdivision files, but I also assigned files.

Q Oh.

23

A But I didn't review them. I basically looked

25 at them to see how many lots they were, where they were

Page 14

board. I'm trying to picture how many I had on the

agenda in any month; usually like three or four. So

3 probably seven or eight a month, total.

4 **O** So 84 to 96 a year?

5 A Yeah, I'd say, maybe a hundred a year.

6 **O** Hundred a year?

7 A Yeah.

8 O So about 250 subdivisions?

9 A Seems fair, best guess.

10 Q Out of all those subdivisions that you

11 processed, do you recall any of them, aside from this

12 one, being subject to the PP&L easement? You know what

13 that is, don't you?

A Yeah. My personal files, no. I did not have

15 any that I recall. I could be wrong, but none that I

16 recall.

20

17 **Q** Okay.

18 A I know I've had many projects with easements.

19 PP&L stands for Pacific Power & Light?

O That's what it stands for, my understanding.

A I think Doug Averill's project, Saddlehorn, I

22 think there's PP&L easements there. Yeah. I've had

23 easements of all kinds, and I can't recall if any of

24 them were PP&L, but I'm pretty sure Averill was, I

5 think.

1 located, how much work was entailed, and then I assigned

2 it to a planner. And that wasn't the whole

3 two-and-a-half years. It was probably a year and a

4 half, once I was promoted to planner two. I know

5 seismic things had come up. Because it surprised me

6 because I'm from San Francisco. So I pictured Flathead

7 County doesn't have seismic activity. But when it did

8 come up, I was like Oh, wow, who knew? So I knew it had

9 come up but not in any of my files.

10 Q And coming from San Francisco, obviously, you 11 have firsthand knowledge of the fact that that's a

seismically active area?

13 A (Nods head.)

14 Q Yes?

15

A I do. Luckily I moved after '89. I hadn't

16 lived there yet.

Q And obviously, you have firsthand knowledge of the fact, having lived in San Francisco, that despite

19 the fact that it's a seismically-active area,

o residential structures are built there every day, are

21 they not?

A In San Francisco, yes. If I said no, I would

23 look like an idiot. Yes, there are a lot of residential

24 structures.

Q In your tenure here with the county, do you

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1 recall any subdivision application having been denied by the county commissioners predicated upon the fact that there was some risk of harm posed by potential

liquefaction? A None of mine. 5

O Okay.

Did you ever process any subdivision 7 application that was in -- was within, say, three miles 8 of the Flathead WPA, to your recollection? 9

10 Q Okay. Can you approximate for me, your best 11 estimate, how many such applications within that 12 vicinity you would have processed? 13

A Less than six for sure, possibly less than 14

four. 15

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O What are the ones that come to mind?

A Warren McConkey's Crown Jewel, I think it was 17 18

Q Crown Jewel. 19

20 A Paul Abel, and I don't remember the name of 21 his. I think it was a minor subdivision. Didn't have as much review, but it might have been called Abel Subdivision; I don't recall. But it's the only one I

23

worked on for him. 24

Q Any other ones? 25

A I left the planning office. 1

Q I'm sorry; the planning office. Thank you. 2

A I just didn't want you to think I knew these

dates off the top of my head.

Q Heck of a memory, I was going to say.

A The older you get, unfortunately, you remember. 6

Q So you left -- you left your employment as a planner for the county November 17, 2007.

A Uh-huh. 9

O Yes?

A Yes, sir. 11

O Why'd you leave? 12

A Because the lure of the animals was so great.

I have 24 animals.

O You do?

A I'm an animal person; yes. And I had been 16 rescuing animals from the shelter, and sending them to other places where they would not be euthanized, for several months and realized that I needed to -- the shelter needed a director. And I had gotten involved 20 and nobody was stepping up to do the job, and I was crazy enough to do it. And so that's -- I left on great terms and I miss them terribly, but it just had become clear that that's the job I was supposed to be doing. 24

25 Q Good for you.

Page 18

A Not off the top of my head. I know that I -- I

don't know if it's within -- it's not within three

miles, I don't think; one for Alan Avery there, Hidden

Lake, I think. This is really a mental exercise; and a 4

few. 5

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Q Did you work on the Mackinaw Estates 6 subdivision? 7

A No.

O Do you recall what planner did? 9

A That was before my time. I don't recall. 10

Q Okay; fair enough. 11

Out of the subdivisions that you did process

that were within that three-mile radius of the Flathead 13

WPA, do you recall whether or not any of them were 14

eventually denied by the county commissioners?

A When I worked on Warren McConkey's, it was 16 17 denied.

18 O Okay.

19 A Another planner had it after me, and it was

approved, if I am correct. I think I'm correct. That's 20

21 the only one I know of, ultimately. Some of those I

worked on near the end of my tenure there, so I'm not 22

23 sure.

Q And you left here on your birthday. You left 24

the county on your birthday, November 17.

A Yeah. 1

> **Q** At any point in time while you were involved in processing the North Shore Ranch application, did you

ever feel pressured by anybody in county government here

5 in Flathead to, you know, be critical of the project or

to, in any way, compromise your professional judgment in

terms of your evaluation of it?

A No.

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MR. PERRY: I have no further questions; thank you so much.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

(Deposition concluded at 2:16 p.m.; witness excused, signature reserved.)

(5) Page 17 - Page 20

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Page 21
                                 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE
 2
               I, BAMBI A. GOODMAN, CSR, RPR, CRR and Notary
    Public in and for the State of Montana, residing in
     Whitefish, Montana, do hereby certify:
 5
               That I did report the foregoing deposition
 6
   after having duly sworn KIRSTEN HOLLAND to the truth;
    that the deposition was taken at the time and place
 8
   stated on the caption hereto; that the testimony of the
 9
    witness was taken in shorthand by me and subsequently
10
    reduced to writing under my direction; that the
11
     foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the
12
     testimony given by the witness;
13
                I further certify that I am not counsel,
14
    attorney nor relative or employee of any party, nor
15
     otherwise interested in the event of this suit.
16
               IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed
17
    my name and affixed my seal of office this 28th day of
18
     September, 2009.
19
20
21
22
                         BAMBI A. GOODMAN, CSR, RPR, CRR and
Notary Public, State of Montana
Residing at Whitefish, Montana
My Commission expires 3/21/10
23
24
25
                                                          Page 22
                            CERTIFICATE OF WITNESS
 1
 2
     PAGE
                  LINE
                                        CORRECTION
 3
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14
     I, KIRSTEN HOLLAND, have read the foregoing transcript of my testimony and believe the same to be true, except for the corrections noted above.
15
16
17
               DATED this
                                   day of
18
19
                                             Deponent
20
          SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this
                                                              day
21
     of
                               , 2009.
22
23
                    Notary Public for the State of Montana
Residing at , Montana
My Commission expires:
24
25
```

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, BAMBI A. GOODMAN, CSR, RPR, CRR and Notary Public in and for the State of Montana, residing in Whitefish, Montana, do hereby certify:

That I did report the foregoing deposition after having duly sworn KIRSTEN HOLLAND to the truth; that the deposition was taken at the time and place stated on the caption hereto; that the testimony of the witness was taken in shorthand by me and subsequently reduced to writing under my direction; that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony given by the witness;

I further certify that I am not counsel, attorney nor relative or employee of any party, nor otherwise interested in the event of this suit.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed my seal of office this 28th day of September, 2009.

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BAMBI A. GOODMAN, CSR, RPR, CRR and Notary Public, State of Montana Residing at Whitefish, Montana My Commission expires 3/21/10

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Tathead County			D (1)	critical (1)
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years (4) 8:1;13:11,12;16:3			
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Y'II